Chapter 7

# A room with a view: The monostratal view with some room for derivations

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This chapter revisits the issue of the status of transformations and underlying levels of representation in the description of grammar. Derivational accounts have been rejected in recent cognitive models, which replaced them with monostratal constructions, as is the case in Construction Grammar (CxG) addressed in most detail here. This study reviews three groups of grammatical constructions (argument alternations, question structures, and the active-passive pair in a number of Slavic languages) and concludes that they conceal properties that are not captured by the notion of "construction" alone as effectively as they are in derivational analyses that accommodate transformational relationships between constructions. Further, I will show that the cognitive arguments against transformations do not justify the recent denial of deep structure representations. Finally, I will point out that the Construction Grammar approach (at least to the structures reviewed here) is non-derivational in name only. In reality, the CxG explanatory framework employed by authors like Goldberg makes implicit use of derivational logic, inevitably involving some operations.

Key words: Construction Grammar, transformations, constructions

## 7.1 Introduction

The influence of Generative Linguistics has been contested more or less vehemently by most cognitive linguists, who disagreed with at least some of its main tenets. One scholar who openly declared her opposition to Chomsky's model of grammar was Wierzbicka. What she took issue with was the syntactocentric view of language which

sought to divorce semantics from grammar. She wrote "Chomskyan antisemantic bias is still hanging over linguistics like a dark shadow" (Wierzbicka 1996: 7). However, while cognitive revisions of many generative assumptions are compelling and can be considered important contributions to our understanding of how language works, cognitive approaches to grammar cast dark shadows of their own. Specifically, I have in mind the framework of Construction Grammar (CxG) and three of its main tenets; the first of which addresses the above-quoted antisemantic bias.

(1) The view of constructions as learned form-meaning pairings: semanticization of grammatical constructions;
(2) The insistence on the arbitrariness of these pairings and its subsequent idiosyncrasy;
(3) The monostratal model of constructions: rejection of deep structure.

While it would be hard to question any of these assumptions in principle, for they have been shown to be very effective in describing a range of language phenomena (such as the existence of a great number of more or less productive idiomatic grammatical constructions, previously dismissed as "periphery" by Chomsky), I believe that the abovementioned CxG ideas should be applied sparingly. Regarding assumption (1), I have argued in various studies, e.g., on the *X's Way* Construction (Szcześniak 2013) or on the Incredulity Response Construction (Szcześniak 2014), that the definition of constructions as form-meaning pairings should not justify proposing overly rich meanings for schematic grammatical constructions. Briefly, the recognition that grammatical constructions are capable of semantic content (vs. Chomsky's antisemantic bias) does not mean that (especially the more schematic) grammatical constructions can be capable of as much semantic content as purely lexical items. For reasons of space, I cannot pursue this point here any further. Instead, I would like to focus on assumptions (2) and (3): the emphasis on the idiosyncratic nature of constructions and the all-out rejection of derivations.

## 7.2 Idiosyncrasy

First, it is helpful to understand the reasons behind the cognitive preoccupation with arbitrariness and idiosyncrasy of grammatical constructions in constructionist analyses. The emphasis on arbitrariness follows from Goldberg's definition of constructions as "*stored* pairings

of form and function, including morphemes, words, idioms, partially lexically filled and fully general linguistic patterns" (Goldberg 2003: 219, my emphasis). Under this definition, even very schematic constructions, such as the passive, must be learned and memorized, because they cannot be derived by application of general principles, i.e., a language user cannot "figure them out" or generate them by rule, and therefore their form and function (or meaning) are only available by rote. Goldberg adds that "any linguistic pattern is recognized as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist" (2003: 219). Arbitrariness is also underscored in Traugott and Trousdale's (2013) definition of "constructions" as "typically arbitrary associations of form and meaning" (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 1). One could then go as far as to equate arbitrariness and unpredictability with idiosyncrasy, as is done by Traugott and Trousdale who observe that "[s]ince the arbitrariness of the sign entails idiosyncrasy, idiosyncrasy is present in a construction by default" (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 11).

It seems then that under CxG analyses, all constructions are by default assumed to be idiosyncratic. This approach is especially evident and extreme in various studies of the Incredulity Response Construction (IRC) exemplified in (4).

(4) a. *What? My son? Rob gas stations?*
b. *Him? Write books? He can't even read!*

For example, Michaelis claims that the construction "owes little or nothing to the ordinary English syntax of predication and subordination" (Michaelis 2010: 169). The idiosyncratic in the IRC is also romanced by others who express the following opinions:

> The unusual morpho-syntax of accusative subject and bare stem verb phrase cannot be accounted for by other existing constructions. (Boas 2013: 240)
>
> The form of the construction does not obey general rules of English. For one thing, there is no verb and yet the expression stands alone as a full utterance and conveys an entire proposition. In addition, the accusative case marking is normally used for objects, and yet the initial NP would seem to act as a subject or topic argument. (Goldberg and Casenhiser 2008: 344)
>
> [T]he semantics of the construction as a whole cannot be derived from either the semantics of the parts or from their form. This particular

> semantics of disbelief towards a proposition cannot in any way be derived from the fact that there is an oblique argument as a subject, a verb in the infinitive, and a complement, e.g., a noun phrase or a prepositional phrase. (Barðdal and Eythórsson 2012: 277)

Before we move any further, it should be pointed out that while some arbitrariness in at least some constructions is an *irrefutable* fact, and while arbitrariness does indeed make storage necessary, the reverse is not necessarily true, i.e., the fact that a given construction is memorized does not automatically make it arbitrary. Goldberg herself admits that "patterns are also stored if they are sufficiently frequent, even when they are fully regular instances of other constructions and thus predictable" (Goldberg 2006: 64). It is easy to think, offhand, of countless examples of such forms. Expressions like *best friend*, *conquer the world* – or *unfinished business* (and many other collocations, clichés or proverbs) are memorized despite being very low on idiosyncrasy. In this study, I will argue that the level of idiosyncrasy has been exaggerated for many constructions. Another claim made here is that this idiosyncrasy results from the rejection of underlying levels of representation. That is, the price of purging a grammar of any reference to derivational mechanisms or playing down derivational-style correspondences between constructions is that many constructions by force appear more idiosyncratic (and complicated) than they really are.

## 7.3 A cognitive case against derivations

One of the hallmarks of many cognitive models, including Construction Grammar, which I review in more detail here, is the monostratal view of grammar. Under this view, sentences no longer need to be derived from underlying levels of representation. That is, no transformations are allowed under CxG analyses. Instead, the form of a sentence depends on what constructions appear in it. This is a radical departure from the belief that sentences have predefined forms (a limited number of sentence types arrived at through transformations). According to CxG analyses, a sentence can, for example, be shaped by the lexical properties of verbs, an assumption reminiscent of the Projection Principle, the difference being that in CxG, verbs and all other lexical items are considered "constructions" on a par with more schematic structures (also "constructions") such as the Intransitive Construction, or

the Time-*Away* Construction, which also affect the form of a sentence themselves, as in these examples:

(5) a. *I'm dancing in the rain*. (The Intransitive Construction)
b. *Dance me to the end of love*. (The Caused Motion Construction)
c. *We danced the night away*. (The Time-*Away* Construction)
d. *What? Him, dance?* (The Incredulity Response Construction)
e. *She danced her way into my heart*. (The X's *Way* Construction)
f. *They danced themselves out of breath*. (The Resultative Construction)

It is important to stress here that in recent cognitive models of grammar, derivations are shunned at all cost, with an almost ideological fervor. One of the most influential figures representing the CxG framework, Goldberg avows her approval of theoretical approaches that "eschew the need for any kind of transformation or derivation" (2002: 327). She and other proponents of CxG analyses underscore the non-derivational character of constructions and they rule out the possibility of any derivational-style relationships between even those grammatical patterns that quite intuitively seem to be related. Some examples of this approach are discussed in the following sections.

### *7.3.1 Alternations*

It is in this spirit that Goldberg (2002) reviews a number of phenomena, such as the locative alternation, and argues that what used to be treated as its two related realizations, such as the uses *Pat loaded the wagon with the hay* and *Pat loaded the hay onto the wagon* (in Goldberg 2000: examples 40–41), are in fact two separate constructions that do not share any common derivational origin. Goldberg (2002) expresses the view that "it is profitable to look beyond alternations and to consider each surface pattern on its own terms" (327). She also looks at the ditransitive alternation and explains that instead of viewing the pattern *Mina sent Mel a book* as a derivation from *Mina sent a book to Mel*, one should focus on finding generalizations applying to each surface pattern. She writes,

> A compelling reason to avoid positing derivations in favor of an emphasis on surface form is simply that there are typically powerful generalizations surrounding particular surface forms that are more broad than those captured by derivations or transformations. We refer to these broader generalizations as *surface generalizations*. (327, original emphasis)

By "surface generalizations", she means descriptions of semantic and formal properties of each surface pattern without reference to its close paraphrase. Thus, the ditransitive pattern exemplified in (6a) below should be considered in isolation from the prepositional alternant (6b).

(6) a. *Chloe sold/showed/threw Chase a book.* (Ditransitive)
b. *Chloe sold/showed/threw a book to Chase.* (Prepositional)

Goldberg shows that each pattern displays its own characteristics and differs considerably from its paraphrase. This is a logical outgrowth of Goldberg's view of constructions, which she defines as "learned pairings of form and meaning". Thus, knowledge of a construction involves understanding how a particular form is paired with its meaning and it does not require associating it with other purportedly related patterns. In what concerns formal properties, all that a speaker needs to know is a construction's surface form, not its alleged derivational origin.

In the case of the locative alternation, one argument against a derivational link that Goldberg offers is that there is an important semantic difference between the two uses: in *Pat loaded the wagon with hay*, the wagon is more affected (it is loaded fully, while some hay may be left), while in *Pat loaded the hay onto the wagon*, it is the hay that is affected (all of it is loaded onto the wagon, while there may still be extra room on the wagon).

There is little point questioning this and other undoubtedly accurate observations offered by Goldberg (nor is there room to enumerate them all here) and I am not aware of any advocates of alternation links between patterns (Pinker 1989; Rappaport Hovav and Levin 2008) who would deny the pattern-specific properties or claim that the two forms are synonymous. Bringing up peculiarities of each pattern cannot serve as an argument against entertaining alternation-style links between them. If anything, Goldberg merely provides an argument against meaning-preserving transformations, a view not held by proponents of alternations.

Very similar arguments against a derivational relationship between two corresponding forms are offered by Gries (2003). In his analysis of verb particle placement (*throw **out** the garbage* vs. *throw the garbage **out***), Gries insists that the two patterns should be considered separately as independent unrelated constructions. He writes, "each construction constitutes a category in its own right". And again, like Goldberg, Gries claims that there are more "differences than similarities between the two constructions" (Gries 2003: 141).

What the two authors do not address is the fact that the cases of alternations they focus on are only a fraction of a large group of phenomena involving constituents that can, under some circumstances, swap positions. In the following examples, the direct object ($_A$) can, for reasons of syntactic weight and/or information structure, change places with the prepositional object ($_B$) more or less regardless of the status of the latter: the swap is possible when the prepositional phrase is an adjunct (7a, 7b), when it is a complement of the verb (7c), and when it is part of a fixed expression, as in the case of *take into consideration* or *bear in mind* (7d, 7e).

(7) a. Never put off [what can be done today]$_A$ [till tomorrow]$_B$.
Never put off [till tomorrow]$_B$ [what can be done today]$_A$.
b. I would like to introduce [the next president of the United States]$_A$ [to you]$_B$.
I would like to introduce [to you]$_B$ [the next president of the United States]$_A$.
c. Put [all relishes]$_A$ [on the table]$_B$.
Put [on the table]$_B$ [all relishes]$_A$.
d. We failed to take [unforeseen circumstances]$_A$ [into consideration]$_B$.
We failed to take [into consideration]$_B$ [unforeseen circumstances]$_A$.
e. Bear [the consequences of your decisions]$_A$ [in mind]$_B$.
Bear [in mind]$_B$ [the consequences of your decisions]$_A$.

While it is in theory possible to single out a few cases of patterns like verb particle constructions and the locative alternation, divide them into two subconstructions and propose separate "surface generalizations" for them, doing so for a potentially enormous number of constructions that undergo the transposition would mean multiplying constructions practically ad infinitum. Each fixed expression such as *bear in mind*, *keep in view*, *have in mind*, or *bring to an end*, etc. would have to be realized as two separate constructions [*bear* OBJ *in mind*] and [*bear in mind* OBJ], each with its own surface generalizations. The problem here is not only that of storage challenges (as each expression would have to be represented twice, using up double the normal amount of the lexicon resources). Treating expressions as two unrelated constructions also presupposes the existence of reverse-order variants which a speaker may never have attested but is capable of using. For example, the expression *cut down to size* appears in object-first form [*cut* OBJ *down to size*] with a lot greater frequency than in object-last form [*cut down to size* OBJ]. It is therefore reasonable to assume that at least some speakers may have never come across the latter form and therefore do not store it in the lexicon. Yet, it would be far-fetched to propose that they would be

unable to use it in the latter variant as in example (8b) below. Whoever used the expression in the variant exemplified in (8b) generated it by a rule that changes the positions of constituents.

(8) a. *We may cut him down to size, if need be.*
b. (…) *to cut down to size the European Commission's role as Guardian of the Treaties.*

### *7.3.2 Questions*

Similarly, what used to be "Exhibit A" held up by generative grammarians as an example of a structure formed through transformations, questions too are now argued to be constructions without any derivational history. Goldberg proposes that questions like *What did Liza buy Zach?* can be assembled without invoking transformations. Instead, all that is needed is a "combination of constructions". She insists that the form of a question-type sentence

> is determined by a combination of a verb phrase construction with the Question construction, the latter of which allows for the "theme" argument (represented by *What*) to appear sentence-initially. No underlying levels of syntax, nor any phonologically empty elements are posited. (Goldberg 2006: 10)

One conspicuous property of questions is that they involve inversion, a decidedly transformation-style operation. Goldberg skirts this problem by calling inversion a construction ("Subject-Auxiliary Inversion Construction", 10). Leaving aside a rather counterintuitive conception of inversion as a form (and not a process), Goldberg avoids the inconvenient fact that the assembly of a sentence through a combination of constructions is itself a process which must take place in a succession of steps.

Given that the assembly of a question requires the combination of various constructions, one may entertain the possibility that the constructions in question are combined in a specific order, rather than all at once. Among "constructions" involved in the formation of a question-type sentence are the replacement of the argument for a *wh*-word and the inversion construction. It stands to reason that they do not occur at the same time and that replacement occurs before inversion, given that the latter need not be implemented at all (e.g., in indirect questions). If that is indeed the case, one should ask a more fundamental question, namely: How does that combination of constructions

in the assembly of a sentence differ from a transformational process? It seems that some constructions (such as the inversion construction) are used as new labels for what should more accurately be referred to as a "process" or "operation". Further, the application of inversion, even if it is accurate to call it a construction, in combination with other constructions is an operational sequence.

Questions and inversion are also a good example illustrating that the price for analyzing all surface forms only in terms of learned constructions (without invoking transformations) is unchecked idiosyncrasy. While (in precognitive models) variation on form could be accounted for by reference to movement transformations, now surface variants have to be given separate dedicated constructions, which do not explain some interesting consequences of the derivational procedures involved in the formation of questions. In example (9), as Anderson and Lightfoot (2002) explain, the different original locations of the *wh*-argument are responsible for when *want to* may be reduced to *wanna*. That is, the reduction is possible in (9a), but not in (9b), because in the latter *want* and *to* are separated by the trace left by the *wh*-argument. Without invoking movement and a trace it involves, the possibility of using *wanna* in (9a) and its impossibility in (9b) would have to be stipulated as an idiosyncratic detail that the speaker needs to memorize. Allowing room for movement in the analysis makes such consequences much less idiosyncratic and mysterious.

(9) a. *Who$_x$ do you want* [IP $_1$to see *x*]?
b. *Who$_x$ do you want* [IP *x* $_1$to go]? (example (9.1) in Anderson and Lightfoot 2002: 187)

### *7.3.3 The passive*

Another example of a grammatical pattern that generative analyses treated as a product of a derivational process is the passive. Contrary to this view, Hilpert (2014) claims that it is "difficult to maintain the idea of a grammatical rule that systematically links both constructions", and he goes on to stipulate that "the Passive is a construction in its own right, a generalisation that speakers have to learn as an independent unit of grammatical knowledge" (42).

Hilpert (2014) reviews the properties identified in Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to make a case for treating the passive as an independent construction. He observes that "it is a tempting idea to think of the Passive as a grammatical rule that takes a transitive Active sentence as

its input and yields a passivized counterpart" (40, original small caps). However, he claims that a considerable number of important differences between them makes it clear that a simple general derivational rule cannot yield passive sentences out of active ones. For example, he looks at passive sentences built around prepositional verbs, showing that while many are perfectly natural and acceptable forms, others are clearly not.

(10) a. *Sally's papers are referred to a lot.*
b. **The children are looked to a lot.*

Hilpert concludes that "the difference between *refer* and *look* is difficult to explain with recourse to a general grammatical rule", the solution being to view the passive as a construction with "distinct collocational preferences". According to Hilpert, prepositional passives sound natural with entrenched or idiomatic combinations of verbs and their objects. "Hence, *approve of a plan*, *pay for everything*, or *deal with issues* are good candidates for prepositional passives, whereas *search under a bed*, *walk across a hallway*, or *choose between two theories* yield questionable examples"[1] (41).

To bolster his case for the passive as an independent construction, he also turns to verbs that only appear in the passive voice. The following examples do not have any evident active variants.

(11) a. *Pat is reputed to be very rich.*
b. *It is rumoured that there will be an election before the end of the year.* (examples (1–2) in Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 1435)

Huddleston and Pullum (2002) express this fact in terms that leave little doubt; they say "[t]he verbs *repute* and *rumour* are wholly restricted to the passive – and are thus morphologically defective, having only a past participle form" (1435). Examples such as these make it quite clear that the passive cannot be derived from an active source, since it does not even exist.

[1] This proposal is not very convincing. The entrenchment or idiomaticity of the verb-prepositional-object combinations does not explain why some fairly unidiomatic combinations are nevertheless still acceptable candidates for prepositional passives.

(i) *Fly under the bridge* (cf. *The bridge was flown under.*)

While on the other hand, some very idiomatic combinations fail to yield natural-sounding passives:

(ii) *Fly under the radar* (cf. **This radar was flown under.*)

Unless it is a way of saying that many pilots managed to go undetected and thus showed a given radar device to be defective or inefficient.

As with Goldberg's arguments for treating alternation variants separately on the grounds that they are too different, here also, the link between the active and passive is being refuted by reasoning that the two constructions are too different to be related. Again, like in the case of alternations mentioned above, no proponents of a derivational link would argue that the two patterns are identical.

Interesting evidence in favor of a derivational link between the two patterns comes from Slavic languages, where the object is marked overtly for case. One striking characteristic is that objects marked for cases other than the accusative do not undergo passivization:

(12) a. *Opiekuję się bratem.*
Baby-sit-1SG się-REFL brother-INSTR
'I am baby-sitting my brother'.
b. **Brat jest opiekowany przeze mnie.*
Brother is baby-sat-PART by me.
'My brother is being baby-sat by me'.

(13) a. *Politycy podlizują się wyborcom.*
Politicians flatter się-REFL voters-DAT
'Politicians flatter voters'.
b. **Wyborcy są podlizywani.*
Voters are flattered-PART
'Voters are being flattered'.

(14) a. *Tomek obawiał się gniewu nauczyciela.*
Tom feared się-REFL wrath-GEN teacher-GEN
'Tom feared the teacher's wrath'.
b. **Gniew nauczyciela był obawiany.*
Fear teacher-GEN was feared-PART
'The teacher's wrath was feared'.

Similarly in Czech, if the object is in a case other than the Accusative, it does not appear as the subject in a passive sentence.

(15) a. *Zbavil jsem se řas v akváriu.*
Rid-1SG be-aux se-REFL algae-GEN in fishtank.
'I got rid of algae in the fishtank'.
b. *Řasy v akváriu byly zbavěny.
Algae in fishtank were rid-PART
'Algae in the fishtank have been gotten rid of'.

(16) a. *Odstranil jsem řasy v akváriu.*
Removed-1SG be-AUX algae-ACC in fishtank.
'I have removed algea in the fishtank'.
*Řasy v akváriu byly odstraněny.*
Algae in fishtank were removed-PART
'Algae in the fishtank have been removed'.

In Ukrainian[2] too, passives do not form out of objects marked for non-accusative cases.

(17) a. я прислухуюсь музиці. (Ya prisluhuyus' muzitsi.)
I listen-1SG.REFL music-DAT
'I am listening to music'.

b. *музика є прислухована. (*Muzika ye prisluhovana.)
Music is listened-PART
'Music is being listened to'.

The first impression is that the passive in these three Slavic languages depends on the case of the object in the active voice. It is as if the active voice construction is consulted each time the passive is formed. This is not to say that the passive is derived out of the active form, but rather that the formation of a passive structure relies on some reference to the case of the object whether that case is read off the lexical properties of the verb or the active form of a sentence.

What the above examples have in common is that they all involve reflexive verbs. Critics of the derivational view could argue that the passive construction simply disallows reflexive verbs; then no reference to the active pattern would be necessary. However, the same constraints apply to non-reflexive verbs that take objects marked for cases other than accusative:

(18) a. *Sędzia uwierzył świadkowi.*
Judge believed witness-DAT
'The judge believed the witness'.
b. **Świadek był uwierzony.*
Witness was believed-PART
'The witness was believed'.

(19) a. Мій лікар порадивме нікинути палити. (Miy likar poradivmye nikinuti paliti.)
My doctor advised me quitting smoking.
'My doctor advised me-DAT to quit smoking'.
b. *Я був порадений кинути палити. (Ya buv poradyeniy kynuty palety.)
I was advised quitting smoking.
'I was advised to quit smoking'.

Some cognate verbs take different cases in Polish and Czech. For example, the verb *rozumieć* ('understand') requires the accusative in Polish,

[2] Examples provided by Monika Hałaś.

while its Czech cognate *rozumět* takes dative objects. Consequently, the Polish verb can appear in both the active and passive voice.

(20) a. *Detektyw zrozumiał obcokrajowców*.
Detective understood foreigners-ACC
'The detective understood the foreigners'.
b. *Obcokrajowcy zostali zrozumiani*.
Foreigners were understood-PART
'The foreigners were understood'.

In Czech, where the same verb takes the dative case, the passive is impossible.

(21) a. *Detektiv rozuměl cizincům*.
Detective understood foreigners-DAT
'The detective understood the foreigners'.
b. **Cizinci byli rozuměni*.
Foreigners were understood-PART
'The foreigners were understood'.

It should be stressed that the passive is blocked if the case of the verb is other than accusative, it is *not* blocked by the meaning of the verb. If a synonym is used which takes accusative objects, the passive is perfectly natural:

(22) a. *Detektiv pochopil cizince*.
Detective understood foreigners-ACC
'The detective understood the foreigners'.
b. *Cizinci byli pochopeni*.
Foreigners were understood-PART
'The foreigners were understood'.

Does all this mean that the passive voice is derived from the active? Most likely not. If it were, and if the derivation occurred on the surface form, some passives should theoretically not be possible. For example, in Polish and a number of other Slavic languages, verbs in negative form take genitive objects (genitive of negation). Because the passive voice does not form when the object of the active voice is other than accusative, the passive in (24b) should not be grammatical. In reality, it is perfectly well-formed, probably because if it does take the active as its input, it does so before the negation changes the accusative case into the genitive in (24a).

(23) a. *Biolodzy widzieli takie zwierzęta*.
Biologists see-PAST such-ACC animals-ACC
'Biologists have seen such animals'.
b. *Takie zwierzęta były widziane przez biologów*.
Such animals be-PAST seen-PART by biologists.
'Such animals have been seen by biologists'.
(24) a. *Biolodzy nie widzieli takich zwierząt*.
Biologists not see-PAST such-GEN animals-GEN
'Biologists have not seen such animals'.
b. *Takie zwierzęta nie były widziane przez biologów*.
Such animals not be-PAST seen-PART by biologists.
'Such animals have not been seen by biologists'.

The examples I have presented so far should make it clear that while classic generative-style derivations are untenable, a purely monostratal architecture of grammar is not entirely accurate either. The cases I have reviewed involved structures with two corresponding subvariants: alternations with two patterns, questions echoing declarative structures, and finally passive sentences whose links with active sentences are being dismissed in CxG analyses. Even if each member of these pairs is an independent construction, the corresponding patterns share too much of their surface forms to rule out any links between them, claiming that each member is derived completely independently. The combinations proposed by Goldberg are non-derivations only in theory. In practice, they are merely labels for what is really a host of derivational-style processes. Next, I review reasons behind the general cognitive aversion to derivations, reasons which upon further reflection do not pose a serious problem to underlying levels of representation.

## 7.4 Alleged reasons against derivations

Two important reasons have been offered to justify the construction grammarian and – more generally – cognitive linguistic skepticism toward generative derivations. One is the perceived implausibility of hidden levels of representation being part of the innate language faculty. For example, in their discussion of derivational rules responsible for the movement of verb particles (*take out the garbage* vs. *take the garbage out*) Culicover and Jackendoff (2005) write:

> We find it unlikely that these variants are realizations of different abstract parameter settings, where the parameters are of sufficient generality to belong in an innate language capacity (and to be coded on the genome and selected for by evolution!). (38)

Similarly, Kay advocates for a monostratal model of grammar through the following reasoning:

> Positing a monotonic and declarative grammar of constructions – as against, for example, the rich architecture of GB – encourages substituting for the dramatic claim that *human infants are endowed innately with extensive knowledge of linguistic structure* the more cautious hypothesis that human infants are endowed innately with a special ability to induce linguistic structures from linguistic data, that is, to acquire linguistic constructions. (Kay 1995: 173)

Another reason why transformations have been viewed with suspicion is that they are assumed to be a necessarily temporal process. It is scarcely to be imagined that each time a sentence is produced, a speaker proceeds from an underlying deep structure, through a convoluted series of derivational steps, to the final surface structure that is pronounced. This extreme and banal view is a caricature of transformations, dismissed early on in the development of generative linguistics. Gazzaniga (1973) reports on research aiming to demonstrate that transformations take real time and admits that although it "provided psychological evidence that a transformation process was involved", the results of the study are "hardly definitive" (111).

As Ott (2010) explains, "successive steps in I-language derivations do not imply any temporal order; derivations are nothing but a formal way of characterizing the speaker-hearer's knowledge" (90). He goes on to acknowledge that it is "impossible to grasp this conception of I-language in any intuitive way" (90). It is indeed counterintuitive to conceive of transformations atemporally, probably because we think of transformations metaphorically as temporal chains of steps. However, the difficulty of imagining transformations outside of real time arises only when the "transformations as a chain of steps" metaphor is taken literally. This point was illustrated by Piaget (2015 [1970]) who argued that "a transformation need not be a temporal process: 1+1 'make' 2; 3 'follows hard on' 2; clearly, the 'making' and 'following' here meant are not temporal processes" (11–12). In other words, transformations should be understood as an expression of a relationship between structures *as if* things changed positions.

These two arguments against transformations – the implausibility of underlying structures being coded innately and the apparent contradic-

tion in terms of a temporal derivational steps – do not justify embracing a monostratal organization of grammar. First, as the above discussion should have made clear, transformations do not have to involve a chronological progression of complicated steps. Transformations should more accurately be construed as relations between structures, and not literally chronological assembly processes. The second argument – the unlikely genetic coding of abstract linguistic principles associated with underlying levels – involves a logical fallacy of false alternatives, also known as the black-and-white fallacy. This error of reasoning involves arguing that if one alternative is wrong (here, the existence of deep structure levels of representation), its opposite (a monostratal organization) must be true. As a result, under an extreme application of this view, intuitively related structures, such as the passive and active constructions, are treated as completely separate entities bearing no association to each other. Even if a derivational view turns out to be wrong, there is of course a third option, one where the two structures are related through shared features (e.g., close synonymy) or by being more concrete realizations of a more general, abstract construction.

## 7.5 Conclusions

Hedging their anti-generative approach, Goldberg (2002) and Hilpert (2014) do concede that correspondences between forms play a role in the speaker's knowledge of grammar. Goldberg stresses that her arguments "should not be taken to imply that possible paraphrase relations play no role in the learning, processing or representation of language" (2002: 349), and Hilpert admits that "speakers will be aware that the two constructions correspond in important ways, that they often paraphrase one another, and that they express similar states of affairs" (42). However, they insist that whatever the correspondences between two constructions, they have to be learned separately as "independent units of grammatical knowledge".

While I am skeptical of this all-out anti-generative approach, I am not adopting an all-out anti-constructionist approach as an alternative. The arguments in this study should not be taken as a case for a return to transformations. There are sufficient grounds for accounting for a great number of constructions without recourse to derivational measures. It would be counterproductive and indeed impossible to attempt to transformationally arrive at the richness of detail and individual vari-

ation evinced by many constructions, such as those in examples (5b–5f) (and of course, no attempts to this effect have been made in generative analyses, which dismissed such uses as "periphery"). But among the idiosyncratic richness and irregular miscellany, there do exist sizeable pockets of regular structures. Assembling them through constructional surface generalizations is as impracticable and counterproductive as transformational derivations of periphery-type structures written off in generative studies.

That is, under a strict constructionist view, the slightest variation in word order in a given structure would make it necessary to postulate a new, independent construction, the way Gries (2003) does it for verb particle constructions. Taken to the extreme, this would mean multiplying constructions ad infinitum for each newly-attested surface configuration of a structure. Goldberg relaxes this approach by stipulating that "'surface form' need not specify a particular word order" (2006: 10). In other words, surface generalizations do not have to be exact, rigid templates for how constructions should be formed; at least some of them are underspecified. This raises a problem, though. Given that even the most rigid phrasal constructions (e.g., *kick the bucket*) allow at least some variation in word order (e.g., *kick the proverbial bucket*), one should assume that most, if not all, constructions are underspecified at least to some degree. The problem here is that if they are indeed underspecified, they also have to carry constraints on what word orders are not allowed, and this is tantamount to equipping constructions with generative-style derivational instructions on what variations will yield well-formed structures.

I believe it would be beneficial to reconcile the constructionist view of grammar (complete with its detailed specifications of surface forms) with some transformations to account for at least those phenomena that are sufficiently regular and frequent to recur across various constructions (e.g., inversion, deletion). Such a mixed architecture should also allow for some constructions to share part of their derivational history, as there is no point deriving completely independently two constructions that share almost all their make-up (like the verb particle constructions). To attempt such relentlessly separate treatment is about as sound as insisting that two closely related species, such as chimps and bonobos, should only be regarded separately, as if they evolved completely independently. The point is that two very similar constructions cannot be similar by coincidence; what they share is a result of a common derivational origin or relationship.

Admittedly, making room for derivations may seem like an unwelcome, inelegant compromise disrupting a harmonious, purely monos-

tratal system. But the fact of the matter is that the system, as championed by its main proponents, is not harmonious. The determinedly anti-derivational nomenclature notwithstanding, the CxG monostratal architecture features sequential operations, which presuppose underlying structures of some form or other. The fact that a sentence is assembled through a "combination of constructions" means that the constructions in question are first available in isolation and they come together through a certain unification algorithm, most likely one involving steps taken in a specific sequence rather than occurring haphazardly, as I argued above in Section 7.3.2. Combination is just another name for derivation.

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